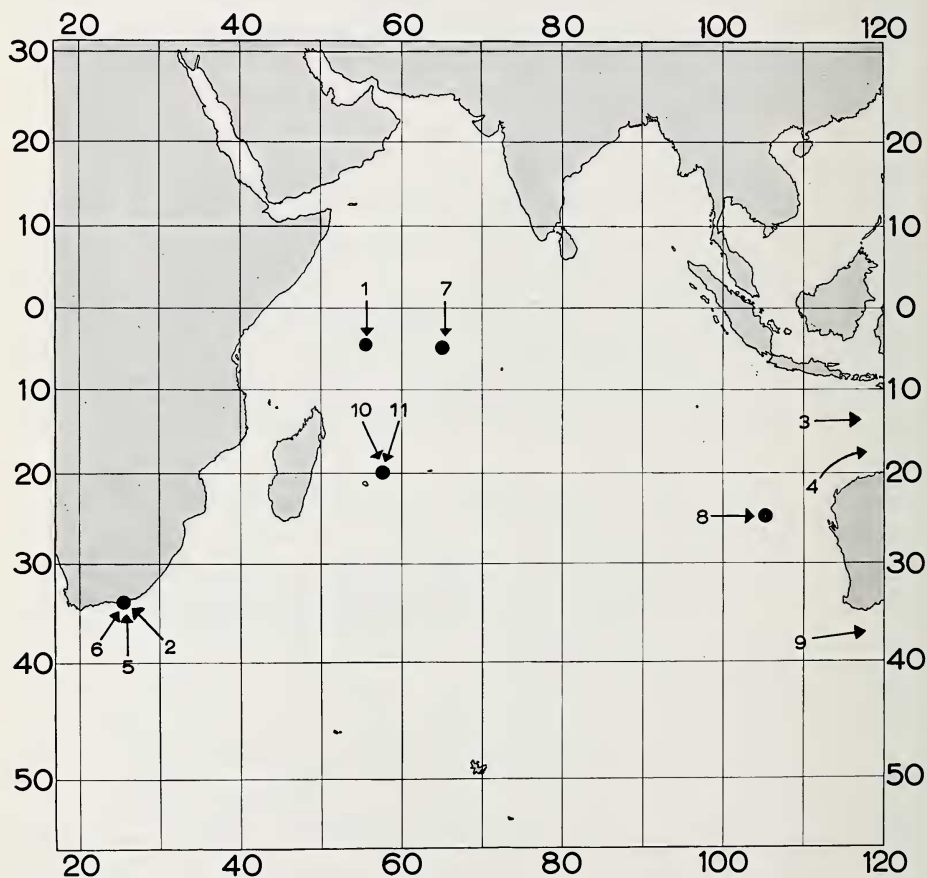


# On two strandings of the Beaked Whale *Mesoplodon densirostris* (de Blainville, 1817) on Mauritius

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On August 8, 1969, a Beaked Whale was washed ashore at Trou aux Biches, on the Northwest coast of the Island of Mauritius. The overall length of the specimen along the back was 429 cm. The distance between the tip of the tail and the vent was 102 cm;



Published strandings and captures of *Mesoplodon densirostris* in the Indian Ocean and adjacent waters. Localities (see also the text of the article): 1, Seychelles; 2, Algoa Bay, South Africa; 3, Southeastern New Guinea; 4, Yeppoon, Queensland, Australia; 5, Shelley Beach, South Africa; 6, Jeffreys Bay, South Africa; 7, capture at 5° S, 65° E; 8, capture at 24°40' S, 105°35' E; 9, Tasmania, Australia, and 10 and 11 strandings on Mauritius reported in this paper.

from the tip of the tail to the genital orifice the distance was 137 cm. The last two measurements were taken from the posterior borders of the openings. Tip of snout to the beginning of the dorsal fin 241 cm. Distance from the tip of the snout to the eye was 65 cm and the length of the pectoral fin was 52 cm.

Another Beaked Whale was found at Tombeau Bay (somewhat more to the South of Trou aux Biches) in Mauritius on February 22, 1973. Of this specimen no measurements were taken as it was already partly cut up when the first author saw it. Unluckily osteological material from neither of the two animals could be preserved.

Both cetaceans were identified as specimens of the species *Mesoplodon densirostris* (de Blainville, 1817) by the presence of massive lower jaws anteriorly embracing the flatter upper ones (see in relation to this character e. g. the photograph published by PRINGLE 1963). The lower jaw of the Tombeau Bay specimen was much less massive than that of the Trou aux Biches one. This is probably related to age. From the development of the lower jaws it follows that both cetaceans were males; this was also evident from the measurements (distance between the anal and genital apertures) of the first stranded specimen.

The two strandings of Blainville's Beaked Whale on Mauritius raise the number of published strandings and captures of the species in the Indian Ocean and adjacent waters to eleven (see map). The first skull known from the area came from the Seychelles and was sent to the Paris museum by Mr. LEDUC in 1839 (GRAY 1846). In 1872, C. WESTENDORP presented a rostrum found near Algoa Bay, South Africa, to the Royal College of Surgeons in London (RAVEN 1942). The Italian traveller LAMBERTO LORIA, who went on expedition in the periods 1889–1890 and 1891–1896, brought back a skull of *M. densirostris* from "Nuova Guinea Britannica" (South-eastern New Guinea) (ARBOCCO 1968/69). Then comes the skull from Yeppoon (23°05' S, 150°42' E) near Rockhampton, Australia, described by LONGMAN (1926). PRINGLE (1963) published a note on two Blainville's Beaked Whales stranded at Shelley Beach near Cape Recife (34°02' S, 25°42' E) and Jeffreys Bay (34°05' S, 24°55' E) respectively. The New Zealand cetologist MCCANN (1963, 1964) reported on two specimens caught by Japanese fishermen at 5° S, 65° E and at 24°40' S, 105°35' E. A stranding in Tasmania (40°50' S, 144°40' E) was recorded by GUILER (1966).

With the exception perhaps of *Mesoplodon bidens* (Sowerby, 1804), strandings of Beaked Whales of the genus *Mesoplodon* occur rarely or are rarely reported. Although the number of records from the Indian Ocean and adjacent waters is still limited, it would appear that *Mesoplodon densirostris* is probably not a rare species in the mentioned area. This impression is reinforced by the fact that we recently learned from Dr. GRAHAM J. B. ROSS of the Port Elizabeth Museum that during the past five years six more specimens of Blainville's Beaked Whale stranded on the coasts of South Africa. Articles on these strandings will be published shortly. That much more males than females are known is probably related to the fact that males are much easier to identify than females. In the second paper by MCCANN (1964) the theory was evolved that reproduction of Blainville's Beaked Whales takes place near the Caribbean and that in the Indian Ocean only full-grown specimens would occur. In the absence of sufficient data we must reserve judgment.

#### Summary

The authors report on the strandings of two specimens of the Beaked Whale species *Mesoplodon densirostris* on the Island of Mauritius. At the same time they publish a review of the captures and strandings of Blainville's Beaked Whale in the Indian Ocean and adjacent waters.

## Zusammenfassung

*Über zwei Strandungen von Mesoplodon densirostris (de Blainville, 1817) auf Mauritius*

Die Autoren berichten über zwei an der Insel Mauritius gestrandete Blainville-Zweizahnwale, *Mesoplodon densirostris*, und geben eine Übersicht aller bisherigen Fänge und Strandungen dieser Art im Indischen Ozean und in angrenzenden Gewässern.

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## BUCHBESPRECHUNGEN

JERISON, H. J.: *Evolution of the Brain and Intelligence*. New York: Academic Press 1973. 482 S., zahlr. Tab. u. Abb., § 27.—

Hinter dem ansprechenden Titel dieses Buches verbirgt sich eine Abhandlung über stammesgeschichtliche Hirngrößenänderungen bei Vertebraten. Sieht man von der anzuzweifelnden Bewertung der Hirngröße als Maß für Intelligenz bei Tieren ab, so bleiben einige interessante Befunde, die zum größten Teil vom Autor bereits vorher in mehreren Publikationen mitgeteilt wurden. Die Hirngrößenvergleiche werden auf der Basis der Körpergewichte durchgeführt, aber die sonst übliche allometrische Methode wird nur diskutiert, soweit sie als Ausgangspunkt des Vergleichs eine gewisse Bedeutung hat. Zur Anwendung kommt eine Abwandlung, die Methode der sog. Polygone. Hirn- und Körpergewichte von mehreren Arten werden in ein doppelt logarithmisches Koordinatensystem abgetragen, und die extremen Punkte der Arten einer Wirbeltierklasse werden gradlinig miteinander verbunden. Dadurch entstehen für jede Klasse der verschiedenen Erdzeiten Polygone, welche sich im Vergleich mit-